

REMARKS**INTERVIEW**

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the interview on April 2, 2004. Claims 75 and 104 were discussed during the interview and compared with Mellgren, U.S. Patent No. 6,085,126, Arledge, U.S. Patent No. 6,535,295, and Varma, U.S. Patent No. 6,564,264. No amendments were proposed, but the following arguments regarding the foregoing prior art references were generally discussed.

CLAIMS 75, 102, 111

As discussed at the interview, the prior art cited by the Patent Office is generally oriented towards increasing the amount of ways that users can customize personalized products. This makes sense, of course, because companies generally strive to provide their customers with more, not less.

A. Claim 75

The invention of claim 75, on the other hand, is generally directed to one user *restricting* what another user can customize. While facially counter-intuitive and certainly non-obvious, allowing one user to restrict another in the manner as claimed is quite advantageous as will be explained more below.

The method of claim 75 provides a method of obtaining personalized information to be displayed by a product provided to an organization (including but not limited to a stamp).

The method includes the step of receiving different login information from first and second users of the same organization.

The first user provides instructions defining which aspects of the personalized information may be changed by the

second user such that at least one aspect of the information can be changed and another cannot.

The second user is provided with aspect values of personalized information along with an indication which distinguishes between the aspects the second user can change and those which it cannot.

Whether an aspect is indicated as changeable or not depends on two things: (1) the instructions provided by the first user and (2) the second user's login information.

The claim also recites receiving an aspect value that was changed from the aspect value transmitted to the second user.

Thus, as noted above, the second user is provided with an indication which distinguishes between the aspects the second user can change and those which it cannot. Moreover, whether an aspect is indicated as changeable or not depends on two different items: (1) the instructions provided by the first user and (2) the second user's login information.

B. Arledge

The Office Action does not rely heavily on Arledge. Rather, when it comes to claim 75, the Office Action essentially relies on Arledge as teaching receiving two different logins from users within the same organization.

Even so, Arledge does not teach the logins of the present invention. Claim 75 of the instant application states:

A method of obtaining information about a personalized product to be provided from a provider to an organization, ... the method comprising the provider: ...

receiving instructions over a network from the first user within the organization, ...

receiving login information
identifying the second user within the
organization ...

In other words, both users must be members of the same organization to which the product is being provided.

Arledge does not contain any such teaching. Rather, Arledge teaches that an end user can log in to a wholesaler's computer to obtain products (col. 3, lines 40-43) and a retailer can log in to see what the user ordered (col. 4, lines 13-22).

Clearly, this is different from the logins of claim 75, where the logins are for users of the same organization to which the product is being provided. While the term "organization" may be broadly interpreted to include more than a single corporate entity, it is still defined as the organization to which the personalized product will be provided. As the retailer is clearly not being provided with the product, Arledge does not teach this aspect of claim 75.

Although Applicant discusses Mellgren below, Applicant also notes that even if Arledge did teach the recited logins, it is not obvious to combine Arledge with Mellgren.

Whereas the present invention places restrictions on what the second user may change, Arledge teaches the opposite. For example, column 15 of Arledge is replete with different tools that may be provided to a user so that it can customize apparently any aspect of the specified product. Therefore, there is no suggestion of a first user limiting a second user's ability to customize information and no motivation -- without the benefit of hindsight -- to add such a feature to Arledge.

C. Mellgren

The Examiner relies in great part on Mellgren, asserting that the reference teaches all of the following:

On the other hand, Mellgren III teaches receiving instructions over a network from a first user within the organization; the instruction defining which aspects of the information have values which may be changed by a second user within the organization such that the instructions define at least one aspect which may be changed and at least one aspect which may not be changed (see at least Abstract and Figures 3, 7-20); transmitting to the second user over the network the values of aspects and an indication, in accordance with the instructions and based on the second user's login information, distinguishing the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second may not change (see at least Abstract, Col 3, lines 43-54 and Figure 3, 7-20); and receiving from the second user over the network the value of an aspect which may be changed in accordance with the instructions and which has changed from the transmitted value (see at least Abstract, Col 5, lines 1-49 and Figures 1 and 2).

Office Action, Feb. 11, 2004, at page 3. Applicant respectfully submits that Mellgren does not teach these elements of Claim 75.

To illustrate Mellgren's lack of teachings, Applicant will first examine individual elements of claim 75 one or more at a time, and then examine the Mellgren passages that were relied upon by the Examiner.

Mellgren does not teach at least the following elements of claim 75:

- two different logins from users of the organization that will be provided with the product

At best Mellgren teaches two computers, one being a kiosk to take orders from customers and the other being associated with the provider to process the order. Mellgren does not even use

the word "login" anywhere in the patent, let alone teaching getting identification information from two different users.¹

- "receiving login information and instructions from a first user of the organization"

Again, Mellgren does not use the word "login" anywhere in the patent.

- "receiving instructions over a network from the first user within the organization, the instructions defining which aspects of the information have values which may be changed by a second user within the organization such that the instructions define at least one aspect which may be changed and at least one aspect which may not be changed"

Mellgren does not teach receiving instructions from a first user which defines what a second user of the organization can and cannot change. At best, Mellgren teaches menus which navigate a customer to different possible customizations. There is no suggestion in Mellgren that those menus are configurable so that one user can define what another user can change.

- "receiving login information identifying the second user within the organization, wherein the login information of the second user is different from the login information of the first user"

Mellgren does not even teach one login, let alone receiving different first and second login information.

- "transmitting to the second user over the network the values of aspects and an

¹ While the claims do not require that the users actually be different people, the claims do require different information associated with login.

indication, in accordance with the instructions and based on the second user's login information, distinguishing the aspects which the second user may change from those which the second user may not change"

Mellgren does teach screens which guide customers regarding customization options. However, Mellgren does not teach that the options depend on: (1) the instructions provided by a first user of the organization and (2) the information which identifies the second user. Indeed, as mentioned above, there is no teaching of such instructions or login information period, let alone this particular use of such instructions or information.

- "receiving from the second user over the network the value of an aspect which may be changed in accordance with the instructions and which has changed from the transmitted value"

Again, Mellgren does not teach such a second user or such instructions.

With the foregoing in mind, it is useful to step through the passages of Mellgren that were relied upon by the Examiner. The Abstract states:

A system for creating and ordering custom designed imprintable media. The system includes a one or more first computers coupled to a central computer. The first computers are configured and arranged to input a type indicating one of a plurality of imprintable media, custom design information to engrave on an imprintable medium of the type input, and order information, and to display an image of the custom design to appear on the imprintable medium. Example custom design information includes text, clip-art, and size and shape of the imprintable medium. Custom designs and orders are automatically

transmitted to a second computer for order processing.

Mellgren at Abstract (emphasis added). The Abstract discloses nothing more than a first computer being used to input customization and order information, and transmitting that information to a second computer for order processing. There is no login information received from a first user of the organization, no instructions received from a first user regarding what a second user can and cannot change, no login information received from a second user of the organization, and no indications of what can be changed by the second user based on the second user's login and the instructions received from the first user.

The passage cited from column 3 similarly fails to teach the elements of the claimed invention:

The present invention is believed to be applicable to a variety of systems and arrangements for consumers to custom design imprintable media such as rubber stamps, signs and name plates, labels and calling cards. The invention has been found to be particularly advantageous in an application environment where a plurality of kiosks are coupled to a central computer system, the kiosks being available for consumers to create custom designs and order products. While the present invention is not so limited, an appreciation of various aspects of the invention is best gained through a discussion of application examples operating in such an environment.

Mellgren at column 3, lines 43-54. Again, there is no teaching of login information received from a first user of the organization, no instructions received from a first user regarding what a second user can and cannot change, no login information received from a second user of the organization, and no indications of what can be changed by the second user based

on the second user's login and the instructions received from the first user.

The Examiner also relies on a long passage from column 5. That passage states:

[The] method involves creating a custom design at a kiosk 102 and transmitting the custom design information into central computer system 106. At step 302, kiosk computer 204 reads user input that specifies a type of imprintable medium that is desired. Example types of imprintable media include rubber stamps, signs and name plates, labels, and calling cards, as well as other types of media for which custom designs are desirable. The type entered by the consumer specifies one of a plurality of imprintable media. The invention allows vendors to efficiently solicit orders from customers or multiple types of imprintable media from a single kiosk 102. In addition, consumers can create custom designs for multiple types of imprintable media at a conveniently placed kiosk 102.

Processing continues at step 304 where kiosk computer 204 reads user input of size and shape specifications (represented as size and shape codes, for example) for the imprintable medium. This allows the consumer to custom design the size and shape of the imprintable medium. At step 306, kiosk computer 204 reads user input of clip-art selections (for example, as referenced by image codes). Kiosk computer 204 presents images in clip-art files 212 on computer monitor 208 for selection by the user. At step 308, kiosk computer 204 reads user input of text (represented as text codes for example to engrave on the imprintable medium. In reading the text, kiosk computer 204 automatically aligns and sizes the text to correspond to the input shape and size specified by the user. Thus, the user does not have to determine by trial and error an appropriate size and alignment for the input

text relative to the selected type, size, and shape of imprintable medium. After the text has been automatically aligned and sized by kiosk computer 204 at step 310, the user may select different formatting to apply to the text, such as underlining, boldness, line positions, and types of fonts. User input of text format parameters are read by kiosk computer 204 at step 310. Kiosk computer 204 reads user input of color selections, at step 312, to apply to the imprintable medium. Example color selections include, but are not limited to, a color for a rubber stamp, foreground and background colors for signs and name plates, foreground and background colors for labels, and colors for images and text on calling cards. At step 314, kiosk computer 204 displays an image of the custom design of the imprintable medium. While shown only as a single step for displaying an image, it should be understood that kiosk computer 204 displays the image of the custom design as it is being developed, for example, after selection of a size and shape after step 304, after selection of a clip-art image at step 306, and after selection of colors at step 308.

Like Figures 7-20 which were also relied upon by the Examiner, the relevant portions of this passage teach nothing more than providing users with options regarding customization of a stamp or the like. Yet again, it does not teach login information received from a first user of the organization, instructions received from a first user regarding what a second user can and cannot change, login information received from a second user of the organization, or indications of what can be changed by the second user based on the second user's login and the instructions received from the first user.

Figures 1 and 2 of Mellgren, which were also relied upon by the Examiner, are similarly bare.

In sum, even if it was obvious to combine Mellgren and Arledge, the references do not collectively teach all of the elements of claim 75. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 75 and the claims dependant thereon be allowed.

D. Claim 102

From the foregoing analysis, applicant submits that the patentability of claim 102 is equally clear in view of Mellgren and Arledge. In this regard, Applicant notes that claim 102 recites:

- "receiving login information identifying a first user within the organization;"
- "receiving login information identifying the second user within the organization,"
- "wherein the login information of the second user is different from the login information of the first user;"
- "receiving instructions from a first user, the instructions defining which aspects of personalization information to be affixed to a product may be changed by a second user;"
- "displaying a list of the aspects to a second user, the list indicating which aspects may be changed and which may not based on the instructions from the first user and based on the second user's login information;"

Applicant also notes that the amendment to claim 102 is typographical.

E. Claim 111

Applicant submits that the patentability of claim 111 is equally clear in view of Mellgren and Arledge. In this regard, Applicant notes that claim 111 recites:

- "receiving login information identifying a first user;"
- "permitting a first user to store the value of an aspect of the personalization information by determining whether the login information of the first user permits access to storing such value;"
- "receiving login information identifying a second user, wherein the login information of the second user is different than the login information of the first user;"
- "sending data about said product over a network to the second user of the organization, the data including unmodifiable aspects of the personalization information which have values stored by the first user of the organization;" and
- "receiving, from the second user, customized values for other aspects of the personalization information;"

There is simply nothing in either Mellgren or Arledge which teaches different logins, sending unmodifiable values to second user that were stored from information provided by a first user with different login information, and receiving customized values for other aspects of the personalization information.

CLAIMS 96 AND 103

Claim 96 was also rejected based on Mellgren and Arledge on the basis that it is a "related" claim. Office Action, Feb. 11, 2004 at page 2. Applicant first notes that all

of the claims of the application are both related and separately patentable with respect to one another.

Second, claim 96 recites elements which the Office Action does not even allude to being present in either Mellgren or Arledge. For this reason alone, Applicant requests allowance of the claim in view of Mellgren and Arledge.

Even so, Applicant states for the record that at least the following combination of elements in claim 96 are not obvious in view of Mellgren and Arledge, either separately or taken together.

- "storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked, whereby if an aspect is locked then the value of the aspect may not be changed and if an aspect is unlocked then the value of the aspect may be changed"
- "sending a web page to the client describing the first and second aspect and, if the aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect and, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed"
- "receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked."

Claim 103 also recites elements for which the Office Action provides no cite to similar teaching in either Arledge or Mellgren. Those elements include:

- "means for storing information representing whether a first and second aspect of the personalization information is locked or unlocked, whereby if an aspect is locked then the value of the aspect may not be changed and if an aspect

is unlocked then the value of the aspect may be changed,"

- "means for sending a web page to the client describing the first and second aspect and, if the aspect is locked then the web page displays the value of the aspect and, if the aspect is unlocked, then the web page indicates that the value of the aspect may be changed, and"
- "means for receiving from the user an instruction to change the information representing whether the first aspect is locked or unlocked."

These features are not taught by either reference.

Applicant also notes that the element of sending and receiving instructions regarding unlocking locked aspects is discussed in the next section on claim 104 as well.

CLAIM 104

Claim 104 has been rejected in view of Mellgren and Varma. However, Varma does not teach, as the Office Action asserts, the following italicized portions of claim 104:

104. (previously presented) A method of receiving personalized information to be displayed on a product, the personalization information having aspects, the aspects having values, the method comprising:

receiving locking instructions from a first user, whereby if the instructions identify an aspect as being locked, then the value cannot be changed until the aspect is unlocked;

sending values of aspects to a second user and indicating whether the aspect is locked, at least one of the aspects being locked;

receiving an instruction from a second user to unlock a locked aspect;

resending the value of the prior locked aspect to the second user with an

indication that the value may now be changed; and
receiving the value of the prior locked aspect.

A. "receiving an instruction from a second user to unlock a locked aspect;"

The Abstract of Varma does not teach the recited step of "receiving an instruction from a second user to unlock a locked aspect." Rather, Varma's Abstract states:

A synchronous collaboration environment that supports real-time collaboration of multiple participants, each having shared and independent views of the shared workspace. Multiple views per participant are provided. Some of the views seen by a participant can be shared views with the usual common cursor and annotation tools. The shared views need not be homogeneous, which means that for a given view, each participant can see more than just some common data in his or window for the view. What the participant sees separately from the common data can make his or her shared view different from that of other participants. The view can be different due to different data being exposed in the view. Some of the views seen by a participant can be independent views. This allows to the participant synchronous working with the shared workspace alone on his or her own. The collaboration system includes a user interface and support for aligning views including goto and overlaying. Participants can modify the workspace through their views in a synchronized manner provided the sharing and access rights of their views allow them to do so.

In other words, Varma's Abstract simply teaches that different users can see different things. There is nothing which indicates that a second user sends instructions to unlock

information which the user was previously prevented from changing.

The Examiner also relies on the following passage from column 4 of Varma to teach the recited step of "receiving an instruction from a second user to unlock a locked aspect:"

The invention supports specific access and sharing rights for each participant. For any participant, the rights can be different for each of the workspace views/interest groups available to him. The access rights include read only, and read and write. Sharing rights of a participant for a view or interest group indicate which participants, including himself or herself, the participant can add or remove from the view or interest group. When a participant has only read rights to a shared view, then he cannot add/delete data through that view. At most he can pass his comments on the view to others by manipulating the shared cursor and/or by selecting from the common data contained in the view. Selected data, if any, is highlighted as usual for all participants sharing the view. Access and sharing rights of any participant can be defined/changed on an individual view or interest group basis or a multiple view or interest group basis. For a participant, the rights can be changed in agreement with the participant, or independently of the participant. The authority to change the access rights of others can be vested in a subset of the collaboration participants. This subset can be changed dynamically. For example, in the case of an interest group, the authority can be delegated to the person in charge of actually running the interest group. The authority can be withdrawn when the interest group is wound up, or whenever it is necessitated earlier. Such authority can be delegated or withdrawn in agreement with the recipient(s) of the authority, or independently of the recipient(s).

Varma, col. 4, lines 8-34. The foregoing passage does disclose that one can modify the read/write permissions of collaboration participants. However, it does not disclose that one of the participants can or should send an instruction to unlock an aspect which was previously locked.

B. "resending the value of the prior locked aspect to the second user with an indication that the value may now be changed; and receiving the value of the prior locked aspect"

Varma also fails to teach the last two elements of claim 104. The Examiner relies on the following paragraph as teaching the above-quoted element:

Our collaboration system supports specific sharing and access rights for each client. For any client, the rights can be different for each of the workspace views available to it. The access rights include read only, and read and write. Sharing rights of a client for a view or interest group indicate which clients, including itself, the client can add or remove from the view or interest group by sending modifications for the purpose. When a client has only read right to a shared view, then the client cannot modify the workspace through that view. At most, the client can be used to pass comments to others by manipulating the shared cursor and/or by selecting the data contained in the view. Selected data, if any, is highlighted as usual in every client sharing the view and the data after the client receives serialized modifications for highlighting data. Access and sharing rights of any client can be defined/changed on an individual view or interest group basis or a multiple view or interest group basis using serialized modifications. For a client, the rights can be changed in agreement with the client or independently of the client. The authority to change the access rights of others can be vested in a subset of the clients. This subset can be changed dynamically using serialized modifications.

For example, in the case of an interest group, the authority can be delegated to the client in charge of actually running the interest group. The authority can be withdrawn when the interest group is wound up, or whenever it is necessitated, earlier. Such authority can be delegated or withdrawn in agreement with the recipient(s) of the authority, or independently of the recipient(s).

Varma, column 8, lines 36-64.

Although the foregoing paragraph talks about changing permissions, there is simply nothing in that paragraph which even alludes to receiving a request to unlock an aspect, resending the value with an indication that the value can be changed, and then receiving the value of the prior locked aspect.

C. Varma teaches away from the recited steps

Because Varma clearly does not teach the last three elements of claim 104, the Applicant understands the Examiner's contention to be that the recited steps are an obvious variant of Varma. However, that is not the case.

First, the recited elements are simply missing from Varma.

Second, Varma teaches away from the concept of receiving and accommodating requests to unlock a locked aspect. Varma states that:

When a participant has only read rights to a shared view, then he cannot add/delete data through that view. At *most* he can pass his comments on the view to others by manipulating the shared cursor and/or by selecting from-the common data contained in the view.

Varma at column 4, lines 15-19 (emphasis added). In other words, Varma teaches that the "most" a participant can do --

when faced with the inability to add or delete data to one part of a view -- is to add comments or manipulate that part of the data that the participant is permitted to change.

In other words, Varma does *not* teach unlocking the information in response to a request. Rather, it teaches, "at most," the opposite. It teaches preventing the user from changing the information the user wants to change. It also teaches forcing the user to add comments or manipulate the information that he is already permitted to change rather than changing the user's permissions. In this regard, Varma clearly teaches away from the claimed invention.

CONCLUSION

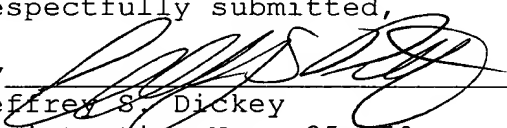
As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he/she telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: June 10, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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